

Quarterly
NEWS
Letter

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No. 4



THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

“FESTINA LENTE:” THE HAMMER CREEK PRESS
OF JOHN S. FASS, NEW YORK

By Jackson Burke

A CHECKLIST OF THE HAMMER CREEK PRESS


Compiled by Herman Cohen

SERENDIPITY

NOTES ON PUBLICATIONS :: EXHIBITIONS

ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

£c. £c.



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FOUNDED in 1912, The Book Club of California is a non-profit association of book-lovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing. Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors and to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books.

Members receive the *Quarterly News-Letter* and all parts of the current Keepsake series, *A Portfolio of Book Club Printers*, 1912-1962. They have the privilege, but not the obligation, of buying the Club publications, which are limited, as a rule, to one copy per member.

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The President's Page

I AM happy to greet the membership during the year in which we will celebrate the Club's 50th Anniversary, and to convey our appreciation to Martin S. Mitau, our recent president. During his capable administration the Club published some of its most outstanding and popular books, including Guillou's *Oregon and California Drawings*, Dr. Hart's *My First Publication*, and Mark Twain and Bret Harte's *Ah Sin*.

I hope that I shall see many of you at the Anniversary Dinner to be held December 8th at the Palace of the Legion of Honor. This promises to be a gala event, one which those who attend will remember for at least another fifty years! The principal speaker will be the well-known author, librarian and bibliophile, Lawrence Clark Powell, Dean of the School of Library Service at UCLA. Those of you who have had the pleasure of hearing Dr.

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Powell speak will know that we can look forward to gaining from him an unusual and entertaining view of the Club and its history. Further details of the Anniversary Dinner will appear elsewhere in this issue.

Another feature of this anniversary year is the Keepsake series, BOOK CLUB PRINTERS, 1912-1962. Each of the printers who have had a long association with the Club has prepared a folder describing this association. This series will provide a retrospective look at the Club from the printer's point of view.

As another anniversary project, the Library Committee under Mr. Albert Sperisen is making a survey of the Club's library, with a view to establishing a consistent program for retentions and acquisitions. One result of this survey will probably be an auction of duplicate volumes early next year. Meanwhile, I would like to encourage members and their guests to visit the Club rooms and browse in the library. The hours are 1-7 p.m. Mondays and 2-5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays.

The Membership Committee under Mr. Warren Howell reports that there is a waiting list for membership. However, applicants are being elected to the Club after about three months' wait; so any of you who would like to sponsor a friend for membership will find this a good time to do so.

Finally, I would like to remind the membership that a non-profit organization like the Book Club must rely on the interest and support of its members if it is to continue to fulfill its function of encouraging the production and appreciation of fine books. In this connection I would like to urge any of you who feel able to change from Regular Membership to Patron (\$100.00 a year) or Sustaining Membership (\$25.00 a year) to make this your contribution to the Club's 50th Anniversary celebration.

—JOSEPH BRANSTEN

“Festina lente”

The Hammer Creek Press of John S. Fass

*By Jackson Burke**

THE PRESS which is the subject of this review was established in 1950. By 1962 a substantial volume of work had been printed although very few people other than close friends of the Press, and John Fass, were aware of what had been done. In the spring of this year, at the suggestion of Herman Cohen, of the Chiswick Book Shop in New York, a complete collection was assembled and exhibited at one of the Grolier Club's informal Saturday receptions. It was the aim of Cohen, and his co-hosts Ben Grauer and the author of this piece, to honor John Fass, to delight their friends, and to enliven what might otherwise be a pedestrian occasion.

On all counts the afternoon was successful. The Grolier Club requested that the exhibition remain in the cases so that several other groups might have a chance to see it. Cooper Union arranged to have a showing for its Graphic Arts students and the suggestion was made to have a show in San Francisco, at The Book Club of California. The occasion at the Grolier Club was delightful, and everyone, including the guest of honor, thoroughly enjoyed it.

John Fass has been a part of printing, and printing has been a part of Fass, since his early youth. He first worked in this field in the Hammer Creek country of Pennsylvania and came later to New York by way of Philadelphia while working as a compositor. In New York he became associated with the influential William Edwin Rudge enterprise, at Mount Vernon. In 1925 he “graduated” from Rudge and, with Roland Wood, started the Harbor Press. This printing and publishing firm produced distinguished work until its close in 1939. Included in the output were many titles for the Limited Editions Club, which started at about the same time.

* Jackson Burke is Director of Typographic Research for the Mergenthaler Linotype Company in Brooklyn, New York.

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From the close of the Harbor Press until his "retirement" at sixty-five Fass worked as a book designer for publishers, but mainly in the more demanding capacity of typographer in the advertising agency field. His last such association was with Young and Rubicam.

For a few recent years he withdrew from the commercial world and sat out the post-retirement period when Social Security benefits are jeopardized by gainful employment. He is now back at work, on the other side of the fence, in one of the most exacting roles a typographer is asked to fill.

Part of the Madison Avenue advertising world is the type composition shop which takes the copy and layouts genius has created during the day, and renders them in type-metal, with "proofs on my desk in the morning." Fass is now responsible for type specification and over-all production in a large shop of this kind, on the "night side." This means he has no opportunity to have his decisions, which must pass muster in the morning, reviewed. Madison Avenue sleeps while East 45th Street works.

The purpose of the foregoing is to give a hint of John Fass' age and to establish his professional competence. This is a real typographer in the best, or Moxon, sense of the word.

An appraisal of the work of The Hammer Creek Press, then, must be done from this point of departure. This is the work of a professional not necessarily playing but practicing. This is the work of an industrious man who does not countenance idleness. The extent of this present exhibition and its unvarying quality confirm these facts. He has written: ". . . it has been much work and lots of fun." The order here confirms my belief that the pleasure is of secondary interest. Fass wrote in 1956 ". . . it was our intention to print a few small items for our friends, and to do some experimental work." On the proper definition of this "small," depends an understanding and appreciation of The Hammer Creek Press.

"Small" here is not "tiny"; it is not "little"; it is certainly not "miniature"; these pages are small and there are few in each item, yet each opening seems a reasonable unit or a part of something quite great. The smallness lies in extent. What there is, in itself, is not small.

Variety is the aim of this enterprise. Fass would rather print

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four copies each of a dozen items than fifty copies of one. And each of the four copies is sure to show a variation in color, or imposition, or binding. If the bibliographer be confounded by this approach, Fass would point out that if books and printed things were regular and exact, anyone could be a bibliographer. Fass derives much pleasure from the variety of his work and more from the thought of the pleasure he knows the bibliographer will get in trying to assort his variants. To keep the game fair the 1956 quotation above continues: "No records were kept of the number of copies printed."

Equal satisfaction is derived from textual and nontextual exercises. Fass likes to mix things up. He believes the Bible is more apt to be read, by non-Bible readers, when broken into logical books and passages that do not appear ponderous or tiresome. Poems, quotations to support illustration, all the texts that he uses are, of course, his own selection compiled from careful library research, which is part and parcel of the pleasure of The Hammer Creek Press operation. Perhaps his most rewarding editorial duty is the selection of titles, authors, etc. for experimental title pages. Some of these are provocative enough to start a search by a naive reader.

It has been my belief that John Fass is more comfortable with non-textual composition, but he does not agree. Variety, he insists, is what solaces him and he enjoys both in equal proportion. To belabor my point, then let me say that few typographers have been as comfortable, without a text, as he.

The typographic resources of this Press are shown in *The Hammer Creek Press Type Specimen Book*, New York, 1954. Page three gives a policy statement by the proprietor: J.S.F. | The Hammer Creek Press | humbly presents | its first, last, and only | Type Specimen Book.

The colophon of this non-textual example states: 100 copies on handmade paper | 22 copies on Jap tissue | have been printed | on a small hand-press | by John S. Fass | at The Hammer Creek Press | "Festina lente"

This specimen has much charm. The ornament shown, and much of its use, is surely French if not Fournier. There are as many pages of ornament as there are of type, and several pages of the turtles without which Fass cannot print.

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A listing of the types is of interest:

Arrighi Italic, 14 point
Centaur, 14 point
Centaur Caps, 16, 18, and 24 point
Post Mediaeval Italic, 14 point
De Roos Roman, 12, 14, and 24 point
Perpetua Title, 18 point
Blado Italic, 24 point
Goudy (oldstyle) Caps, 36 point.

The interest in this list is not the names; they are all excellent types and mix comfortably. What is significant is the size. There are no "small" types at all and the least is a thoroughly respectable twelve point. The variety derived from this modest resource is another tribute to Fass.

Many of the variant items in the output of this Press show changes in color of the elements. The whole effect is accomplished with one basic black and discreet amounts of the three primary colors, mixed by Fass for the occasion. Gold is also used on occasion, either by laid-on leaf or from cakes of "pure gold." These experimental variations of black type with colored ornament, and the reverse, are obviously a delight to the printer and are possible mainly by virtue of the hand-press use.

The press used by Fass is what is commonly known as a "small Albion." Its size requires that it be table- or bench-mounted rather than on the floor; it is less than three feet high, over-all. Its provenance is of some interest to present readers as it was one of two such presses brought to America from England by Bruce Rogers just after the turn of this century. The other one came to John Henry Nash, in San Francisco, and is now Black Mack, owned by Thos. MacDonald of Los Angeles. Fass got the Rogers press in 1950 from Valenti Angelo, who had it only a year.

A recent conversation with Fass has established that his press has a characteristic which is probably typical of the breed. It certainly is the reason why one I once owned was traded. The platen rises hardly enough to permit the whole assembly of bed, tympan and frisket to slide under smoothly and comfortably. It fits, but it is a chancy thing that must be controlled constantly. and every pull, if care is not taken, is a possible slurred sheet,

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Bear this fact in mind in appraising the work of The Hammer Creek Press. Fass considers, however, only another aspect of the press. He wrote: "Due to the limitations of the press, sizes are small, approximately four by six."

The conduct of this press and the facilities and time available permit no consideration of printing dampened sheets, with all that this method entails. Therefore many of The Hammer Creek Press items are bound in the Oriental style with the pages printed on one side only and the folded fore edges uncut. This is not an expression of regard for the East necessarily, although the printer, because he enjoys turtles in all manifestations, finds much to enjoy in the arts of the Orient. Binding in this manner quite simply permits the use of fine and thin Oriental papers which may be printed dry. Fass has found no domestic papers and few European hand-mades which are suitable for his use. Marbled papers and decorative Japanese designs are used to effective advantage in his bindings. Most of the limited editions of his works have decorative boxes or slipcases as well.

Although this is a one-man operation, mention must be made of the distinguished staff of artists who serve in a collaborative role. Valenti Angelo came with the Albion press and has contributed many designs, illuminations and turtles. Burt Carnes' woodcuts enhance a number of pages and one of *his* turtles is almost a press mark. It is John De Pol, however, whose woodcuts run through nearly the whole illustrated output of The Hammer Creek Press. He has recreated the scenes and atmosphere of Fass' boyhood from photographs of the old Pennsylvania Dutch country in *A Primer of life along the Hammer Creek or, some friends and enemies of the turtle*, and Fass has provided the setting for some work of his own choosing in *The Four Seasons*. His contribution in turtles is staggering.

The exhibition of the work of The Hammer Creek Press is unique in that it is as complete as could be possible without gathering the total product of the activity. There has been no selection made, nothing has been left out intentionally; this is it. So the perfection that is the significant quality manifest can be seen as the only way in which John Fass can operate. His concepts, his execution, the material he has selected to carry out his ideas, all contribute to an extraordinary display of taste and

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technique. Fass is seen as an industrious and gifted typographer.

A concluding note on John Fass as a person may be in order for the benefit of those who may not be able to see him through his work. He is a slight man of medium height whose hair seems prematurely white because it caps an unlined, young and serene countenance. His eyes are active, glowing and more than slightly amused. His mind and wit are quick and his conversation is nimble. He has many good friends because he is himself a good friend. He doesn't look like a turtle at all.

A Check List of the Hammer Creek Press

*Compiled by Herman Cohen**

SAVE for the omission of the yearly typographic Christmas cards, and some single broadsides, the list is complete to date. Records have not been kept as to the quantity of each of the items printed. Information has been supplied either as stated in the colophon or from the memory of the printer.

1. LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS. 6 pp. $5\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Paper wrappers. [Colophon]: Printed at the Hammer Creek Press [1950].
2. [VACATION ANNOUNCEMENT]. Figure of Confucius. "Confucius say: . . ." 4 pp. $3\frac{7}{8} \times 5$ inches. Self wrapper. N.p.n.d. [1950].
3. RECESSIONAL HYMN. By Rudyard Kipling. 5 leaves. $4\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Black paper wrappers, with printer's ornaments stamped in gold on front cover. [Colophon]: Printed at the Hammer Creek Press [1950].

* Herman Cohen is a well-known antiquarian bookseller, the proprietor of the Chiswick Bookshop in New York.

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4. *Recessional Hymn*. By Rudyard Kipling. With the 2-line refrain printed in red. 4 leaves. $4\frac{5}{8} \times 6$ inches. Gray wrappers with narrow white label on front cover. [Colophon]: Printed at the Hammer Creek Press [1950].
5. WATCHMAN, TELL US OF THE NIGHT. *An Old Christmas Carol*. 12 pp. $3\frac{3}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Paper wrappers. [Colophon]: Printed by John S. Fass at The Hammer Creek Press [1950].
6. TYPE AND STICK AT THE HAMMER CREEK PRESS. 32 pp. $6\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Brown paper wrappers over thin boards, with paper label device of the press on the front cover. At the Sign of the Turtle 1951. With 4 pp. leaflet: "66 copies of this booklet were printed . . . of which 25 are for sale."
7. *Thomas Carlisle on BOOKS*. 4 pp. $4\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Self wrapper. [Colophon]: Printed at the Hammer Creek Press [1951.]
8. A NOTE ON THE HAMMER CREEK *in the Northern Part of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania*. 18 pp. $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Paper wrappers, with device of the press printed on the front cover. New York: The Hammer Creek Press 1951.
9. THE LORD'S PRAYER. 4 pp. $6\frac{1}{2} \times 4$ inches. Self wrappers. [Colophon]: *Printed by John S. Fass* at The Hammer Creek Press [1951].
10. [THE LORD'S PRAYER]. Broadside. 7×5 inches. Reverse plate printed in reddish brown within triple rule border. Unsigned. [1951].
11. THE FOUR SEASONS WITH WOOD ENGRAVINGS BY JOHN DE POL. 6 leaves. $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Brown paper wrappers, with label of title and woodcut on front cover. New York: The Hammer Creek Press 1951.
12. "BLOOD TOIL TEARS AND SWEAT." (By Winston Churchill). 4 pp. $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4$ inches. Self wrappers. [1951]. Unsigned.
13. R. S. V. P. *and within 48 hours will delight us*. 4 pp. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$ inches. (1951). Invitation to a dinner for John Archer at the Grolier Club.

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14. ALONG THE HAMMER CREEK *and the* HAMMER CREEK PRESS *with some data.* (With) Two wood engravings by John De Pol. 6 leaves. $6\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Brown paper wrappers, with short title in gold on front cover. N.Y. The Hammer Creek Press 1952.
15. THE HAMMER CREEK PRESS *has engulfed* The Hell-Box Press . . . With 2 wood engravings by John De Pol. 4 leaves. $6\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ inches. [1952].
16. FESTINA LENTE. Turtle composed of printer's ornaments, in 3 colors. 4 pp. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ inches. *The Hammer Creek Press at the Sign of the Turtle* [1952].
17. *Some Oriental Versions of the* TURTLE. 17 pp. French fold. $6\frac{5}{8} \times 4$ inches. Paper wrappers, with label on the front cover. The Hammer Creek Press 1952.
18. A COLLECTION OF MARBLED PAPERS. 3 printed leaves, 38 with gray type borders. $7\frac{1}{4} \times 5$ inches. Heavy vellum paper over boards, with black label stamped in gold on front cover. "COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY THE HAMMER CREEK PRESS." [1952]. One copy.
19. [*The Song of Solomon, II, 11-12*]. 4 pp. printed on 2 leaves. $6\frac{1}{4} \times 4$ inches. [1952]. First page contains device and statement: "*The Hammer Creek Press at the Sign of the Turtle.*"
20. SALUTATION. *The Hammer Creek Press Salutes* PAUL A. BENNETT. 2 leaves. 6×4 inches. Marbled paper wrappers, with monogram on front cover. 1953.
21. THE PRAYER OF DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, *preceding His Inaugural Address.* 4 pp. $6\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Brown paper wrappers, with short title printed on front cover. [Colophon]: *Printed at The Hammer Creek Press* [1953].
22. A PRAYER BY DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER. Broadside. $9\frac{1}{4} \times 6$ inches. [1953]. Unsigned.
23. BARN SIGNS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH *Usually called "hex signs."* *Collected and arranged by* The Hammer Creek Press. 3 leaves + 12 leaves each containing 2 decals to the page.

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$6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Wrappers over boards with seal of the press as a hex sign on front cover. [1953]. 4 copies.

24. THREE WOOD ENGRAVINGS BY JOHN DE POL FOR THE HAMMER CREEK PRESS. 4 leaves laid into a black paper portfolio with device in gold on front cover. $6\frac{1}{4} \times 4$ inches. *Printed by John S. Fass 1952.* [1953].
25. MOTTO FOR A PRINTING OFFICE. 6 pp. $6\frac{1}{4} \times 4$ inches. Blue paper wrappers, with ornamental device on front cover. [1953].
26. IN THIS PRINTING OFFICE BE VIGILANT . . . Text of the above motto printed as a broadside. $9 \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ inches. *The Hammer Creek Press* [1953].
27. MEMO: ONE TRAMP PRINTER TO ANOTHER. 5 pp. 6×4 inches. Paper wrappers, with short title and imprint on front cover. [1953].
28. FOR LO! THE WINTER IS PAST . . . Broadside. $10\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Device of the turtle in gold and black followed by the text in capital letters from The Song of Solomon, II, 11-12. [1953].
29. TO GEORGE MACY *celebrating twenty-five years in the making of beautiful books.* 2 leaves. $6\frac{1}{4} \times 4$ inches. Marbled paper wrappers, with paper label on front cover. [Colophon]: *Printed by John S. Fass at The Hammer Creek Press (1954).*
30. DESIGNS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH *Usually called "hex signs."* *The following pages are decals arranged by The Hammer Creek Press.* 18 circular decals pasted on gray printed square backgrounds of 3 inches. $9\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Black paper over boards, covers lightly dappled with diluted ink. [1954]. 6 copies.
31. The Hammer Creek Press TYPE SPECIMEN BOOK. 52 pp. $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Marbled paper wrappers over boards, with paper label on the front cover. N.Y. 1954. "100 copies on hand made paper . . ."
32. The Same. 54 pp. With 2 added devices of the press. Marbled paper wrappers, stitched Oriental style. ". . . 22 copies on Jap tissue . . ."

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33. *A Collection of* TURTLES *made by The Hammer Creek Press.* 36 pp. French fold. $6\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Marbled paper wrappers, stitched Oriental style. N.Y. 1955. 40 copies.
34. [Wood Engraving of Turtle by John De Pol]. Broadside. $8 \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Printed on Japanese tissue with gray tint background. Unsigned.
35. The Work of The Hammer Creek Press 1950 • 1956. 20 pp. $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Marbled paper wrappers over boards. [Colophon]: "Approximately 100 copies printed . . . New York 1956."
36. A PRIMER of life along the Hammer Creek or, some friends and enemies of the turtle. With wood engravings by John De Pol. 22 pp. $6\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Marbled paper wrappers over boards, with paper label on front cover. N.Y. 1956. Approximately 75 copies printed.
37. SOME OLD DECORATIVE PIECES FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE HAMMER CREEK PRESS. 27 pp. $7\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Marbled paper wrappers, stitched Oriental style, with octagonal paper label on front cover. N.Y. 1957. 15 copies.
38. WOOD ENGRAVINGS BY JOHN DE POL FOR THE HAMMER CREEK PRESS. 28 pp. $8\frac{5}{8} \times 6\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Patterned paper stitched Oriental style, with paper label on front cover. [Colophon]: "... John S. Fass . . . 1957."
39. A B C . . . X Y Z. These twenty-six letters of the alphabet have conquered the world . . . 18 leaves mounted on black paper. $10 \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Portfolio. [Colophon]: "... 16 copies . . . at the Hammer Creek Press 1958."
40. THE ALPHABET IN VARIOUS ARRANGEMENTS. 29 leaves. $8 \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Marbled paper wrappers, stitched Oriental style, with black paper label of alphabet in gold capital letters on front cover. [Colophon]: Hammer Creek Press 1958. Inscribed: "One of 8 copies printed by John S. Fass."
41. *Twenty-five Poems about* TREES & LEAVES including some prints of leaves. 52 pp. French fold. $6\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Paper wrappers, stitched Oriental style, with paper label on front cover. HAMMER CREEK PRESS 1959. 30 copies on Sekishu paper.

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42. THE SIXTH CHAPTER OF ST. MATTHEW CONTAINING THE LORD'S PRAYER. Hand-ruled in red. 10 pp. $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Paper wrappers over boards, with symbolic device of St. Matthew on front cover. HAMMER CREEK PRESS [1959]. 65 copies.
43. The same. Title and capital letter "T" heightened with gold. Heavy vellum paper over boards. One of 20 numbered copies printed on Arches hand-made paper for the artist, Valenti Angelo, and the printer.
44. The Song of Songs which is Solomon's. 32 pp. French fold. $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Marbled paper wrappers, stitched Oriental style, with paper label on front cover. [Colophon]: "40 copies printed on Sekishu paper by John S. Fass . . . 1959."
45. THE BOOK OF RUTH As recorded in the Old Testament. 36 pp. French fold. $7 \times 4\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Decorative paper wrappers, stitched Oriental style, with paper label on front cover. [Colophon]: "Thirty-five copies . . . 1960."
46. THE BOOK OF JONAH Taken from the Old Testament. 23 pp. French fold. $7 \times 4\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Decorative Japanese paper over boards, with printed dust wrapper. The Hammer Creek Press 1960. Forty copies printed.
47. The General Epistle of JAMES as recorded in the New Testament . . . 31 pp. French fold. Black paper wrappers dappled with blue ink over boards, with paper label on front cover. The Hammer Creek Press 1960. 30 copies.
48. PANEL ORNAMENTS composed with type ornaments. 56 pp. French fold. $6\frac{1}{2} \times 4$ inches. Decorative paper wrappers, stitched Oriental style with paper label on front cover. [Colophon]: "30 copies . . . 1960."
49. THE MIGHTY OAK. 32 leaves. $8\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{5}{8}$ inches. French fold. Patterned paper wrappers, stitched Oriental style, with paper label on front cover. [Colophon]: *6 copies printed by John Fass at The Hammer Creek Press. [1958].* One copy.
50. The reproductions on the following pages were printed directly from the leaves at the Hammer Creek Press by John S. Fass. 49 leaves. $6\frac{1}{4} \times 5$ inches. Patterned paper

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wrappers, stitched Oriental style with paper label on front cover. [1959]. 3 copies.

51. PRINTED FROM THE LEAVES. *All the prints on the following pages were made directly from the leaves by John S. Fass.* 60 leaves. $8\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Decorated paper wrappers, stitched Oriental style, with paper label on front cover reading: "The beauty of leaves." THE HAMMER CREEK PRESS 1959. One copy.
52. LEAF PRINTS MADE BY JOHN S. FASS AT THE HAMMER CREEK PRESS. 1958-9. 78 leaves. $9\frac{3}{8} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Hand-blocked Japanese paper wrappers, stitched Oriental style, with label on the front cover. [1959]. 2 copies.
53. Various shaped leaves of the MULBERRY TREE. With leaf on title. With 19 examples in color on rectangular backgrounds. $9\frac{3}{8} \times 6\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Decorated paper wrappers, stitched Oriental style. [Colophon]: Device of the Hammer Creek Press. [1960]. One copy.
54. LEAF HORN BOOK. *The reproductions on the following pages were made directly from the leaves by John S. Fass at the Hammer Creek Press.* 56 leaves. $7\frac{7}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Hand-blocked Japanese paper wrappers, stitched Oriental style. [1961]. One copy.
55. *Hand-Blocked* ORIENTAL PAPERS. With 4 devices printed in color on title. 92 leaves. $10\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Decorative paper over boards, linen back. *The Hammer Creek Press* [1961]. One copy.
56. MARBLED PAPERS. With device of the press on title. 37 specimens mounted on beige printed backgrounds. $9 \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Marbled boards, linen back. *New York The Hammer Creek Press* 1961. One copy.

Current Exhibit—The Hammer Creek Press

EVERYONE who has read the article in this issue on John Fass' Hammer Creek Press will want to visit the Club's current exhibit of the complete work of this press. This is one of the most unusual exhibits the Club has had, and it affords residents of the West Coast a unique opportunity to view Mr. Fass' delightful productions. For this exhibit we are extremely grateful to Mr. Fass, and also to

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Jackson Burke and Herman Cohen, who devoted much time and effort to preparing the material for showing. Members and their guests are cordially invited to visit the Club rooms and see for themselves the work of The Hammer Creek Press, which will be on display through the month of September. The hours are 1-7 p.m. on Mondays and 2-5 p.m. on Tuesdays through Fridays.

ANNIVERSARY DINNER

MEMBERS will soon receive in the mail their invitations to the dinner celebrating the Club's 50th Anniversary. This gala event will take place on Saturday, December 8th, at the Palace of the Legion of Honor. The evening's festivities will begin at 7 p.m. with a champagne reception and an exhibition of all the books the Club has published. For the dinner which follows, Mallette Dean has designed a highly attractive menu (which will be sent, as a special Anniversary keepsake, to all members of the Club). As the high point of the evening's entertainment, Dr. Lawrence Clark Powell, Dean of the UCLA School of Library Service and noted author, will speak on the first fifty years of the Book Club.

The Board of Directors and the Anniversary Committee hope that a great many members will attend the dinner and join in the celebration. Dress will be informal; admission will be \$12.50 per person (\$25.00 per couple). To facilitate arrangements, the Committee requests that members who wish to attend make their reservations as soon as possible after they receive their invitations.

The Book Club of California

Notes on Publications

THE CLUB'S SPRING PUBLICATION, *R.L.S. to J.M. Barrie: A Vailima Portrait*, has met an enthusiastic reception. Printed by the Grabhorn Press, the book was praised by William Hogan of the San Francisco Chronicle as "one of the year's handsomest books." The drawings by Isobel Strong, Stevenson's stepdaughter, have proved to be an especially popular feature of the volume. A few copies of this Stevenson first edition are still available to members who have neglected to order one, or would like to purchase one as a gift. The price is \$12.50 (plus 50c sales tax in California).

Our fall book will carry its readers into the heady, pine-scented air of the Yosemite country during the days when the "incomparable valley" and the Mariposa Grove were only beginning to be known as tourist attractions. Guide on this excursion will be the ebullient, articulate—and somewhat awe-struck—Thomas Starr King, who, fresh from describing the beauties of the White Hills of New Hampshire, was to find a new love and a new inspiration in the wondrous Sierra Nevada.

Entitled *A Vacation Among the Sierras*, the book will consist of eight letters written by King to the *Boston Evening Transcript* describing a ten-day trip to Yosemite during July, 1860. These letters, never before reprinted in their entirety, are important for more than their pleasing style and for the valuable descriptions they give of such places as Coulterville, the Mariposa Estate, Clark's Ranch, and the Yosemite Valley itself. They serve to recall the fact that Starr King, well remembered as a preacher and orator and as one of California's great patriotic heroes of the Civil War period, was also a nature writer of considerable stature, one of the group headed by Emerson and Thoreau which during the mid-nineteenth century caused Americans to see the world with "new eyes." And, as one of the earliest and most widely circulated detailed descriptions of Yosemite, the series was important in making the marvels of the valley known to the world and may have been a factor leading to the precedent-setting Yosemite Grant of 1864.

A Vacation Among the Sierras will be printed by the Ward Ritchie Press in an illustrated, limited edition of 375 copies. The letters will be edited by John A. Hussey, who wrote the introductions for our earlier publications, *The Voyage of the Racoon* and John Swan's *A Trip to the Gold Mines of California in 1848*. We anticipate that there will be a considerable demand for this book, which will be not only a significant item in Yosemite literature but which will throw new light on the personality of Thomas Starr King. Members desiring copies are advised to send in their orders early.

New Sustaining Members

THE FOLLOWING have changed from Regular Membership to Sustaining Memberships. The two classifications of membership above Regular Membership are Patron Memberships, \$100.00 a year, and Sustaining Memberships, \$25.00 a year.

MRS. JEANNETTE H. HOPKINS
DR. MARY E. HEATHERMAN

Portola Valley
San Francisco

Quarterly News-Letter

Elected to Membership

The following have been elected to membership since the publication of the last News-Letter.

<i>Member</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>
Franklin Armstrong	San Francisco	Richard Dillon
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Mr. and Mrs. John L. Field	San Francisco	Joseph Bransten
Mrs. Orville J. Golub	West Los Angeles	Katherine Westheimer
Herbert Hoover	San Mateo	Richard Dillon
Frank E. Powers	New York City	Norman Strouse
Martha Riddell	San Francisco	David Myrick

Serendipity

BOOK COLLECTING IS, of course, a pleasure of many facets, of many specialties and directions. One that has increased in popularity recently is that featuring books illustrated (or embellished) by painters and sculptors. Although American artists have been slow to embrace this medium of expression, those of Europe—especially France—have indulged in it to a high degree. As evidence of this is *Picasso As a Book Artist*, a definitive work just issued by The World Publishing Company. In it, author Abraham Horodisch of Holland has given a detailed analysis of all books decorated by Picasso, and has included a bibliography and sixty-eight reproductions of the artist's book work. It proves to be an exciting one-man show, revealing once again Picasso's astonishing versatility. Perhaps more important, it reveals a fascinating possibility for specialized book-collecting: books containing the original graphic work of important painters. (\$6.50).



SPEAKING OF GREAT ARTISTS, the Club's library received recently the first volume of *The Daybooks of Edward Weston*, edited by Nancy Newhall, his official biographer. This volume comprises about half of the original manuscript—mainly of the 1920's when the photographer lived in Mexico—and later a second volume will be issued covering subsequent years. Seldom has an artist written about his life and art as vividly as Weston, and the result is an unusual document of the struggle of an artist to forge a style, to adjust himself to his world, and to appraise his contribution to it. Forty of his photographs are included. (The book is distributed by Wittenborn & Company, at \$10.00.)



DR. ROCKWELL D. HUNT, 95, dean of Californian historians, has completed his 25th book, *Personal Sketches of California Pioneers I Have Known*. Among the eleven

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pioneers described from personal observations are General John Bidwell, Moses Schallenberger, William Lewis Manly, and Charles Prudhomme. The edition, limited to 500 copies, was designed and printed by J. Wilson McKenney, and published by the University of the Pacific. (\$6.50.)



WE HAVE AT HAND the first issue of a new forty-page journal called *The Black Art*, devoted of course to "the art, craft or mystery" of printing. Edited and published by James Moran in London, it is a "repository of information about a craft which has so many historical and antiquarian facets." This first number contains several well-illustrated and provocative articles: "Bulmer and Lord Stanhope" (England's great seventeenth-century printer; and the father of the first all-iron press); "Logotypes & Ligatures"; "The Cuckoo Hill Press" (an English private press whose owner has built his own press); "The Young-Delcambre Composing Machine" (an ingenious 1840 patent); and various notes and book reviews on the subject of printing. (The annual subscription is \$6.00: The Furnival Press, 31 Furnival Street, London E.C. 4.)



ANOTHER INDICATION of enthusiasm in the private press field may be had from a survey of *Private Press Books, 1961*, a sixty-page booklet now being issued annually in England. Over sixty private presses in the western world are included, but we suspect that many times this number produce pamphlets or books almost every year. Unfortunately most of these avocational printers are lethargic about sending in examples of their work. So that this publication may be more complete in the future, private press owners in America should mail examples of their work (or a detailed description of same) to Roderick Cave, The Library, University College of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad. California private presses in the 1961 check list include: Grace Hoper Press (Sherwood Grover, San Francisco), Hart Press (James D. Hart, Berkeley), Nova Press (Wm. P. Barlow, Jr., Piedmont), Tamalpais Press (Roger Levenson, Berkeley).



BECAUSE OF amazing improvements in the printing techniques of reproduction, collectors are now offered excellent facsimile editions of the most important work of manuscript artists and the early master printers. For example, Urs Graf-Verlag in Switzerland is publishing in two large folio volumes the *Apocalypse of Gerona*, a tenth-century manuscript in the possession of the cathedral of Gerona, Spain. The reproduction of these colorful and beautifully illustrated

Quarterly News-Letter

pages is impressive. Philip C. Duschnes in New York is the sole distributor in this country. (Pre-publication price is \$385.00.)



STANFORD UNIVERSITY has published *Essays In Memory of Morgan A. Gunst*, written by David Magee for The Book Club of California, Sinclair Hamilton for the Grolier Club, George L. Harding for the Roxburghe Club, Jacques Guignard for the *Société de la Reliure Originale* of Paris, and a representative from the Board of Trustees, Stanford University. Morgan Gunst was a charter member of the Book Club, and for almost forty years was one of its most active and generous supporters.



CAREY S. BLISS, Curator of Rare Books at the Huntington Library, reports that the Library has finally completed its holdings of Book Club publications, with the recent acquisition of the *Memorial Address on Lincoln* by George Bancroft. Although Mr. Huntington was a very early member of the Book Club, the Library never had a standing order for all publications until about ten years ago. Consequently some of the early volumes were not acquired when they were published.

CALIFORNIA and the WEST

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Gifford (Edward W.) and Block (G. H.) California Indian Nights Entertainments; Stories of creation, etc. Large map.	\$7.50
Hunt (Aurora) The Army of the Pacific; its operations in California and Southwest, 1860-1866. Map and illustrations.	\$10.00
Kelley (Robert L.) Gold vs. Grain; Hydraulic Mining controversy in California's Sacramento Valley. Map and illustrations.	\$9.50
Priestley (Herbert I.) Franciscan Explorations in California. Edited by Lillian E. Fisher. With maps.	\$7.50
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First and Last Consul: Thomas Oliver Larkin and the Americanization of California. Selected letters edited by John A. Hawgood. 160 pp. \$5.00

Thirty Explosive Years in Los Angeles County, by John Anson Ford. 232 pp. Illus. \$6.00

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